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July 17, 1986

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
Rockefeller University
New York, NY 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you for the speedy and informative response to my enquiry regarding the substituted uracils episode. I especially am pleased that you were able to send me copies of your correspondence with Du Pont officials. This correspondence verified information I had obtained through Du Pont's research and special compensation reports, but it has a much greater sense of immediacy. May I have permission to cite and/or quote these materials in my book?

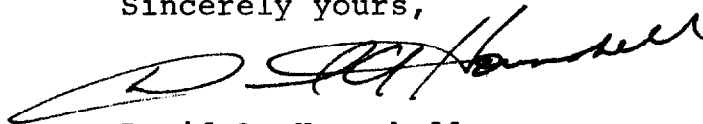
Two days ago, I interviewed Conrad Edmund Hoffmann, who with J. W. McGahen did the research to respond to your concern about the substituted uracils replacing thiamine in DNA. He told me an interesting story about his boss Max T. Goebel, Director of Research in the Industrial and Biochemicals Department. Hoffmann joined Du Pont in 1952 and had wanted to use radiolabelling techniques to carry out mechanism studies on the substituted urea herbicides. Goebel vehemently opposed the idea of using carbon 14 even though Central Research had employed it. Your letter to Greenewalt, which specifically suggests using radiolabelled methods, provided the critical leverage Hoffmann needed to use the techniques.

I found your correspondence with H. J. Muller fascinating. We recently finished a chapter on Du Pont's Haskell Laboratory of Industrial Technology, and in doing contextual research it became pretty clear that few people (who could do something about it) shared your concerns in 1950 about systematically exploring the environmental/health dangers of the growing number of chemicals being manufactured in the United States. There were serious differences of opinion within the federal bureaucracy, and only the U.S. Health Service strongly advocated programs similar to those you proposed. But as your exchange with Muller makes clear, there was little appreciation for the new genetics at that time.

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Thanks also for sending me the brochure on the Rockefeller Archive Center. Darwin Stapleton and I were fellow graduate students, and I have the highest respect for his abilities and integrity.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. A. Hounshell", written in a cursive style.

David A. Hounshell
Director
R&D History Project

Associate Professor of History
University of Delaware

DAH:mem